

FOSTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
AGENDA  
MINUTES

Location:

Foster Town House  
180 Howard Hill Road  
Foster, RI 02825

Tuesday, March 22, 2011  
Open Session - 7:00 pm

**1. Convene Meeting** – Chair, Kathleen Swanson called the meeting of the Foster School Committee to order at 7:03 pm on Tuesday, March 22, 2011.

*a. Roll Call* – All members were present: Chair, Kathleen Swanson, Vice Chair, Shelley Pezza, member, Patricia Fountain, Interim-Superintendent, Robert Wallace and secretary, Mrs. McCullough.

*b. Pledge of Allegiance* – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

**2. Approval of Minutes** – On a motion by Ms. Pezza seconded by Mrs. Fountain, the Foster School Committee approved the minutes from February 15, 2011, Open Session. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee approved the ‘sealed’ Executive Session Minutes. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and Mrs. Fountain seconded for discussion, to approve the minutes from February 8, 2011 Budget Workshop Minutes but the motion failed due to no vote. Mrs. Fountain gave a statement which will be attached to the revised February 8<sup>th</sup> Budget Workshop Minutes. Mrs. Fountain investigated what happens when members of a Committee do not agree with Minutes when there is no voice recording. Independent legal counsel advised Mrs. Fountain that the individuals in the audience who were witnesses could give a signed affidavit statement. In contacting the Attorney Generals Office, they advised a complaint could be filed. Mrs. Fountain opted not to go either of these routes as there would be a cost to the school department. Mrs. Fountain submitted a statement as to why she did not agree with the Budget Workshop Minutes.

“The following statement is to be attached to the February 8, 2011 Foster SC Budget workshop minutes as well as to be reflected verbatim in the Foster SC minutes for March 22, 2011.

I, Patricia Fountain Foster SC member, respectfully disagree with the February 8, 2011 Foster SC Budget Workshop minutes as presented. The minutes, as written, do not accurately reflect the dialogue of the meeting.

Specifically, item 4 paragraph 3 line 10 should read:

“Mrs. Pezza suggested possibly laying off more teachers...’more pink slips’”.  
Mrs. Fountain agreed with Mrs. Pezza further stating that layoffs would have to take place before March 1<sup>st</sup> due to state law...”

Budget Workshop of February 8, 2011 will be approved at the April 26, 2011 Foster School Committee meeting as revised: “Ms. Pezza suggested laying off more teachers...’pink slips’. Mrs. Fountain agreed with Ms. Pezza further stating that layoffs would have to take place before March 1<sup>st</sup> due to state law...”\*

\*Please see attached statement submitted by Mrs. Fountain.

**3. Approval of Warrants** – Warrants dated 2/15/2011 for \$10,440.00 (Uncle’s Sound System - Intercom Installation), 2/15/2011 for \$132,754.81, 3/17/2011 for \$48, 441.29, and 3/10/2011 for \$109, 631.87 were all approved on a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain. Discussion followed. Motion passed. Vote = 2-1-0.  
Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain - no

#### **4. Old Business (for discussion/action)**

##### a. Roof Collapse – Update

1) *Building* – Mr. Wallace updated the School Committee as to progress and future plans of the roof collapse. He explained that the new plans for reconstruction of the roof will withstand forty (40) pounds per square foot (psf) snow load. Odeh Engineers have been able to thoroughly inspect all trusses in the ‘new’ addition section of the school, by requiring all ceiling tiles and insulation being removed. The ‘new’ plan for reconstruction will involve ‘sistering’ the existing trusses. Also, within the scope of the insurance policy, all materials will be returned to the classrooms, cleaned, and debris removed. Mid summer is the expected completion date.

Mrs. Fountain offered a volunteer to help reestablish the library. The young man is an Eagle Scout candidate and would use this opportunity as his “Eagle Scout Project” with the Superintendent’s approval. Mr. Wallace said this was not a problem and asked that the candidate contact him at his earliest convenience.

Mrs. Fountain also asked the Superintendent for a copy of the final report from Odeh Engineers. Mr. Wallace said he would supply the document to the School Committee.

2) *Student* – Mr. Wallace informed the School Committee that students have handled this situation the best, and staff, and parents have handled the situation favorably also. Everyone is looking forward to going ‘home’. Ms. Pezza complimented the students for their maturity and handling of the situation and she is very proud of the children.

An agreement has not been reached with the Gloucester School Committee and the Foster-Glocester School Committee for building usage fee. The said Committees have given their suggested price for this use, through Mr. Wallace, who has passed it on to The Trust for their review. The rental is for per classroom at each of the schools.

##### b. Budget 2010-2011 – This item is a continuing Agenda item.

c. Budget 2011-2012 – Malcolm Moore, Business Manager, reviewed his revisions to the budget for the School Committee. The following revisions have been made:

1. Two revisions earlier, the reduction of \$157,000, the 5% of maintenance the town reduced. Before submitting this budget to the Town Council the School Committee decided to level fund to the 2009-2010 budget. The School Committee's decision was based on the opinion of legal counsel. There are a couple of changes/revisions, one being technology, of which the Region will charge \$20,000 for 'behind the computer' services. There have been meetings with Dr. Barnes and he will provide the details. Then \$30,000 budgeted for a part-time technology person – specifics not available yet.

2. Small change in Life Insurance - \$40.00/person/year.

3. Buyback – is now reduced by the amount of the co-pay.

4. Unemployment – originally = two individuals for six months – now extended for the year.

5. Health Insurance = was budgeted for 10%, then reduced to 5% (which is historical) but re-budgeted the 10%.

The net effect of these is \$43,000 in other words the total budget from last year to this year will go down by \$43,000. The transportation credit to the Region from the state will be given to Foster which will be determined on per pupil cost. This year the benefits for School Psychologist will be billed to the Region for one fifth of the cost to include benefits. On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain, the School Committee voted on the recommendation of Mr. Wallace to adopt the proposed modifications to the budget as presented by Mr. Moore. Discussion followed. Motion passed. Vote = 2-0-1.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – abstained – for further review of the modifications.

d. Public Comment Policy – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee voted to adopt the "Public Comment at School Committee Meetings Policy, 1120.4 for the Foster School Department". Discussion followed. Motion failed.

Vote = 0-3-0.

e. Legal Services – Mrs. Fountain reviewed with the School Committee a sample RFP for acquiring a set amount for legal advice / services. Mrs. Fountain asked if the School Committee wanted a more formal proposal with a defined scope of work. Mrs. Fountain will type an example RFP and e-mail it to the Committee's secretary and she can distribute the document for the Committee's review.

f. Grant Writing – Update – Mrs. Swanson updated the Committee that Jessica Veri is still researching Grants that the School Department is eligible for.

g. Superintendent – LOA – Mr. Wallace informed the School Committee that he had spoken with Dr. Irving and had a long discussion. Dr. Irving indicated she planned

to return to work on April 19, 2011. Mr. Wallace assured the School Committee that he would be available to Dr. Irving to update her on present issues, negotiations, roof collapse status and budgets.

Everyone thanked Mr. Wallace for his outstanding dedication, professional manner and his ability to go above and beyond for the school department.

h. Interim-Superintendent – Update – On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain, the School Committee voted to extend Mr. Wallace’s contract up to and including April 19, 2011. Discussion followed. Motion passed. Vote = 2-1-0.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – no

## **5. New Business (for discussion/action)**

a. Audit Report – The Audit had not been completed as of this meeting.

b. Budget Review Committee Recommendations – Mrs. Fountain reviewed the adopted report put forth by the ‘Budget Review Committee’. This report and the Financial / Accounting Procedures of the Foster Gloucester Regional School District had been supplied for the School Committee to review. The School Committee asked the Administrative Secretary to sum up her procedures for purchase order processing.

c. Certified Pay Freeze – MOA – On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Mrs. Swanson the School Committee voted to accept with gratitude to the Foster Teachers’ Association the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Foster Teachers’ Association (FTA) entered into today March 22, 2011 for forfeiting the 2% salary increase for this current school year 2010-2011 on basic salary schedule identified as the latest version with items 4 & 6 added. The School Committee voiced their appreciation of the teachers forfeiting their 2% raise. Discussion followed. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

d. Mileage Reimbursement- MOA – On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Swanson the School Committee voted to approve the temporary MOA of \$.51/mile reimbursement for personal vehicle use between West Gloucester Elementary School and Ponaganset Middle School. Mrs. Swanson, Chair, read the MOA aloud. Discussion followed. The IRS standard for mileage reimbursement for personal vehicle use is \$.51/mile. The Trust is in agreement to reimburse the school department as this is an added expense in lieu of the roof collapse. Motion passed. Vote = 2-0-1.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain - abstain

e. Resource Sharing with the Region-Technology – Mrs. Swanson reported that Dr. Barnes general estimate for ‘behind the wall’ computer work should be about 18 to 20 thousand, which will include state reporting. Also discussed computers / equipment repairs being handled on a work order basis and identified what needs are not being met.

f. FELT – Update – Mr. Wallace updated the School Committee on the current status of the FELT group. The School Committee had approved the use of St. Paul’s Church’s basement to temporarily house the program. An article in the newspaper stated that there were 100 students attending this program. As a consequence, the state fire marshal was called to inspect the facilities at the church. The state fire marshal stated that there were code violations. This report prompted Mr. Wallace to cease all operations of the FELT program at St. Paul’s church. At this time, Mr. Wallace and Lori Greenleaf are researching other facilities to hold the program. Mr. Wallace will keep the School Committee updated.

## **6. Communication/Reports**

a. Correspondence – A number of communications were included in the School Committee’s packets for review.

b. Superintendent's Report – Mr. Wallace reported that he asked Mr. McGovern to speak with the three custodians and cut back their hours from 8 per day to 6 per day.

c. Public Comment – Mrs. Reilly spoke to the feelings for the grievance to give back the ESP’s 2% raise for the current school year. Mrs. Reilly stated that she was never approached until yesterday, March 21, 2011 about the 2%.

d. Future Agenda Items –

NECAP Scores – Mrs. Fountain and Mrs. Seitler

Capitol Maintenance – Upgrades for Education and Technology – Mrs. Swanson

## **7. Vote to go into Executive Session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business referred to in R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a) (1) Personnel (2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation and Threatened Litigation.**

a. Collective Bargaining

b. Threatened Litigation

The School Committee voted on a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

## **8. Reconvene Open Session –**

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee voted to go into Open Session at 10:35 pm. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

Mrs. Swanson reported that the School Committee was updated on litigations and discussed negotiations. No votes were taken.

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee voted to seal the Executive Session Minutes of March 22, 2011. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

**9. Adjournment –**

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza the School Committee adjourned at 10:37 pm. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Helena McCullough  
Secretary Foster School Committee

3/22/2011

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